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A SECOND ADDRESS

FROM THE

COMMITTEE of ASSOCIATION

OF THE

COUNTY of YORK,

TO THE

ELECTORS of the COUNTIES, CITIES, and BOROUGHS

WITHIN THE

KINGDOM of GREAT BRITAIN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

The RESOLUTIONS *of that* COMMITTEE,

At their *Meeting* held on the 17th of *October*, 1781,

FORM of the PETITION agreed to at the *Meeting* of the *County* of *York*, held on the 30th of December, 1779, and ſhortly afterwards preſented to PARLIAMENT.

FORM of ASSOCIATION agreed to at the *Meeting* of the *County* of *York*, held the 28th of March, 1780.

ALSO,

A STATE of the ASSOCIATED COUNTIES, &c. and the Objects of their reſpective ASSOCIATIONS.

THE SECOND EDITION.

YORK:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A SECOND ADDRESS, &c.

PARLIAMENT, in its original form, ſeems to have been admirably fitted to reſiſt the attack of corruption. In that primitive ſtate, a majority of the Electors of England appointed a majority of the Houſe of Commons; and in fact, the right of election annually veſted in the Body of the People a regular and complete controul over their Truſtees. In an Aſſembly ſo conſtituted, the poiſon of corruption could hardly find admittance in any dangerous degree; reſpect to the conſtituent body would generally operate as a preſervative againſt it; and on any appearance of infection, that effectual remedy which the public poſſeſſed would be inſtantly applied. But our eaſy unſuſpicious anceſtors unwiſely ſuffered our Monarchs from Henry VI. down to Queen Elizabeth, to mar the ancient Conſtitution by a moſt diſproportionate addition of Boroughs. By that unhappy negligence, the Nation loſt in ſubſtance the juſt and neceſſary right of controul; and then, the corruption of a Parliament, no longer checked by the general voice of the People, ceaſed to be an impracticable attempt.

But though the corruptibility of Parliament may be juſtly dated from that innovation of Royal Authority, the actual corruption of it was reſerved for a more unfortunate period. The ſeeds of political depravity were for ages latent in the defective frame of the Houſe of Commons; and it was poſſible they might ſtill have remained there, in a ſtate of harmleſs inactivity, if chance, and the ill-judged parſimony of our forefathers had not preſented to the Crown the

opportunity for Parliamentary Seduction. From the depreciation of money, the ancient ſalaries paid by the counties, &c. to their reſpective Members, had become too inſignificant to be worth their acceptance; and from a moſt abſurd frugality, the neceſſary augmentation had been improvidently omitted. Hence aroſe a facility to create a corrupt dependence on the Crown, juſt when the danger of all attempts to controul or abolish Parliament by force had been fully proved by repeated experience. The growing diſpoſition in that Aſſembly to liſten to temptation, was not long unobſerved; it was ſeized with alacrity, and improved with aſſiduity; and thus the evils which the inequality of our popular repreſentation is adapted to produce, were at laſt drawn forth to actual exiſtence.

The virtue of Parliament which had reſiſted every effort of violence, was ſoon relaxed by the ſkilful diſtribution of emolument. As this lucrative intercourſe grew habitual, their ancient jealouſy of the Crown decreaſed; their reſponſibility to that Public from whom they derived their exiſtence, gradually became an obſolete idea; and in its ſtead, more courtly maxims of duty, better ſuited to the new object of their devotion, were eaſily introduced. At laſt, a coalition unknown to the genuine Conſtitution took place; and Parliament, now diſengaged from the Body of the Nation, like the Senate of Imperial Rome, meanly ſubmitted to a dependence on that Power, whoſe incroachments it was originally formed to prevent and controul.

To men of political ſagacity, it was not difficult to diſcern this change in our ſyſtem of Government. By them its riſe and progreſs were diſtinctly marked, and its pernicious conſequences were fairly foretold.

But

But the Public, with a generous credulity, continued to hold Parliaments in that veneration which their former fidelity had ſo well deſerved. The forms of the Conſtitution, they ſaw, were ſtill maintained; and the parade of debate ſtill gave to that obſequious Aſſembly the air and ſemblance of its ancient freedom. During the earlier part of this period, the Nation was too much dazzled with the ſplendour of military glory, to remark the growing Influence of the Crown. Afterwards when the practice of corruption was avowed by the Miniſter himſelf, the diſſatisfaction of the Public was lulled into acquieſcence by the flow of general wealth, and the mildneſs of Adminiſtration. The two firſt Princes of the Hanoverian Line hardly knew the extent of that authority which they had ſo recently obtained. Their right to the throne was not admitted without diſpute; and the depoſition of James, which had led to their elevation, was an inſtructive leſſon which they could never forget. From theſe conſiderations, and from the natural goodneſs and moderation of thoſe Princes, they were content to exerciſe their authority with caution and lenity; never exceeding the limits of the law, and manifeſting on all occaſions a reſpectful deference to the ſenſe of the Public. Under their gracious and fortunate Adminiſtration, the miſchiefs of corruption were happily palliated; and hence, rational diſapprobation, and the apprehenſion of evil, yielded to the Senſe of eaſe and actual proſperity.

But thoſe popular maxims of Government, were leſs ſuitable to that ſituation of ſuperior power, to which their Succeſſor attained. *He was born and bred a Briton*; and He had the fortune to engage the affections of thoſe men, who, in apparent contradiction to their high monarchical principles, had long endeavoured to depreſs his family; but who at laſt forget-

ting *the exiled Prince*, transferred to *Him* all the warmth of their zeal and attachment. He was aided by the acceſſion of theſe natural Partizans of the Crown, and He was enriched by that augmentation of patronage, which before the conciliation of his new friends, had been unwarily eſtabliſhed as a balance to their diſaffection. In theſe circumſtances, inſtead of the condeſcenſion and cautious policy of the preceding reigns, Miniſters were encouraged to adopt, and enabled to realize more lofty ideas of Government. In their conception, it ceaſed to be neceſſary to conceal from the public eye, the full extent of the influence of the Crown, and by their inſtigation, an open and unſcrupulous exerciſe of it was reſolved on.

A fit opportunity for diſplaying the plenitude of power was quickly found. The popular principles, the zeal, the intrepidity, perhaps the indiſcretion of a private Gentleman, had given diſpleaſure, *where* it was moſt dangerous to diſpleaſe. To gratify reſentment *there*, the Commons were ſolicited to puniſh the offender; and that Aſſembly could ſtoop to oppreſs an already injured individual, and in violation of the firſt and moſt important principle of the Conſtitution, to exclude him from his lawful ſeat in Parliament. During the courſe of that famous perſecution, England firſt beheld a ſpectacle, which, if the ancient proportion had been maintained in the popular repreſentation, muſt have been for ever unſeen; a Houſe of Commons diſtruſted by the Nation, and at variance with it. Hence, by turns thoſe petitions of the People to the Crown againſt the treachery of their Truſtees; and to their Truſtees againſt the great and increaſing influence of the Crown. But as the Miniſter of the Sovereign wiſely protected his auxiliary Commons from the indignation of their conſtituents; his

his faithful Allies have ſince returned the obligation, with all the zeal of gratitude. The ſtudied contempt with which thoſe complaints were treated from the Throne, has been fully repaid in the Senate, by a more inſulting neglect of thoſe Petitions, which were acknowledged to be juſt. The proofs of the abſolute aſcendant of the Crown, have thus been rendered complete and indiſputable; the dream of the Independence of Parliament, ſo long and ſo fondly believed, is now a detected illuſion; and in conſequence of that diſcovery, diſcontents have ariſen in the Nation, which can only be ſuppreſſed by the utter extinction of Liberty, OR SATISFIED BY SOME SUBSTANTIAL REFORMATION OF PARLIAMENT.

It would be injurious from the preſent inactivity of many of our countrymen, to ſuppoſe they are not attached to the cauſe of Liberty, with the ſame generous ardour which diſtinguiſhed their anceſtors. The maſs of the People is yet untainted by corruption; it is ſtill animated with equal zeal, and enlightened perhaps, with a ſuperior knowledge of the true nature and end of Government. Their integrity and their attachment to the Conſtitution may be relied on, with equal confidence. But the novelty of their preſent ſituation, the difficulties and diſadvantages of their controverſy with the Crown, the repeated rejection of a National Petition by their own Repreſentatives, may well produce a pauſe of aſtoniſhment. In this anxious interval of ſuſpence and gradual recollection, it behoves the Agents of the People thoroughly to explore the ground before them; to inquire from what cauſes their firſt effort has been defeated; and to conſider by what means the obſtacles to their final ſucceſs may be beſt removed, or moſt happily ſurmounted.

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In this early ſtage of the conteſt, the People ſeem to have been foiled, not ſo much by the ſtrength of their opponents, as from their own inexperience and diſunion. The alliance between the Crown and a dependent Parliament, however unnatural it may appear on the principles of the Conſtitution, is yet too ſtrongly cemented by mutual benefits to be diſſolved by vague and deſultory efforts; by Petitions eagerly adopted by the Nation, but irreſolutely ſupported, and at laſt abandoned with puſillanimity, on a ſecond or a third repulſe. With the People, there is an undoubted ſuperiority of numbers; but in many diſtricts, the popular Aſſemblies, partly from improvidence, partly from a candid expectation of redreſs by Parliament, neglected to make thoſe neceſſary arrangements, without which, they could neither cooperate with other petitioning Bodies, nor give a continued ſupport to their Petitions: and thus acting without ſteadineſs, without concert, and uniformity of plan, they have been baffled by the art and activity, the union and regularity of diſcipline of the Mercenaries of the Crown.

It is by the weight of a General Aſſociation, in ſupport of ſome rational and ſpecific propoſal of Redreſs, the Body of the People muſt regain their loſt influence over their Truſtees. That meaſure alone can collect and conſolidate their force, and give permanence and ſyſtematical Union to their oppoſition. Experience has already ſhown upon a more limited ſcale, that Aſſociation is a *practicable meaſure*; and that it is a meaſure of *unqueſtionable legality* appears from the ſpirit of our laws; from the expreſs right to preſent Petitions to Parliament, which involves the right to join in any peaceful mode for the more effectual ſupport of thoſe Petitions; and from the acquieſcence and tacit confeſſion of the adverſe party themſelves,

themſelves. The application of this inherent power of the People may have been ſuſpended hitherto, by the real or ſuppoſed fidelity of Parliament. But when can Aſſociations for obtaining a juſt attention to the complaints of the Nation be neceſſary, if not, when Parliament itſelf admits that, alarming abuſes do actually exiſt, and yet refuſes to correct them? When that Aſſembly, in a moment of repentance, confeſſes the over-ruling influence of the Crown, and ſeems to invite the People, by a ſtrenuous exertion of their Conſtitutional Powers, to remove thoſe ſhackles from which it wants the virtue to diſengage itſelf.

Under ſuch a perverſion of the end for which Parliament was inſtituted, it would be ſlaviſh timidity to acquieſce and ſubmit. On the other hand, to meditate ſchemes of violence and forcible reſiſtance, would be fool-hardy raſhneſs and impetuoſity: it would even be unpardonable folly not to diſcourage ſeriouſly ſuch ill-adviſed attempts. But they who are friends to the Peace and to the Liberty of their Country, may ſafely ſteer a middle courſe between thoſe fatal extremes. By the timely adoption of a legal and conſtitutional Aſſociation, the Nation may be preſerved from the hazards and calamities of Civil War, and from the more laſting and intolerable miſeries of Arbitrary Government.

To perſons of a mild and cautious character of virtue, the propriety of this mode of oppoſition, may perhaps appear in ſome degree queſtionable. They ſee, not without concern for the Conſtitution, its ſtrong and apparent tendency to deſtruction; but they diſtruſt that eagerneſs of zeal, and that more hardy diſpoſition to ſerve the Public, which prompt men of warmer, but perhaps leſs amiable diſpoſitions,

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to ſtand forth in the hour of danger. By the adherents of corruption theſe ſuſpicions are cheriſhed by every artifice of miſrepreſentation; and if the end propoſed by the People be juſt and neceſſary, if the means hitherto employed be unexceptionably lawful, future deſigns are but too ſucceſsfully imputed to them, which every wiſe and honeſt man muſt diſapprove. Hence the long neutrality of many liberal and worthy men! Sunk in a ſtate of ineſficient repoſe, they ſlumber in the midſt of perils; and under the ſpecious name of Moderation, cover even from themſelves their langour and inactivity. On this large and important claſs of men, the Rectitude of Oppoſition to a Corrupt Syſtem of Government, may fail for a time to make a ſufficient impreſſion; but at laſt dire neceſſity, and the approach of unavoidable diſtreſs, muſt awake them from their dream of ſecurity.

At that moment, when the alarm of danger rouzes even the indolent; when men of a mild and unenterprizing temper are ready to aſſociate in the common defence; then it is devoutly to be hoped, THE FRIENDS OF THEIR COUNTRY will have adjuſted their diſputes; and having ſettled their plan of public Reformation with prudence, will be prepared to ſupport it with unanimity. Then it will behove the Opponents of the undue influence of the Crown to unite their legal exertions, and to pour on, in one unbroken current, againſt the corruptions of our Government: For that moment will be deciſive of our fate. If the Collective Body be then miſled or divided in the purſuit of ſeparate or improper objects, their pacific efforts muſt be waſted once more in unconnected and unavailing ſtruggles. And in that caſe, it is eaſy to foreſee, that no future attempts

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to reſtore the Conſtitution by legal means, can have any rational hope or proſpect of ſucceſs.

Among the active Opponents of the undue influence of the Crown, the Advocates for the Oeconomical Reformation *alone*, compoſe a numerous, and in rank and figure, the moſt diſtinguiſhed claſs. To recommend *their palliative plan*, they diſplay the miſchiefs of innovation, and treat propoſitions for the melioration of Parliament as ſpecious, but as impracticable projects. In their conception, the improvement of the popular repreſentation by any of thoſe alterations which other Reformers have propoſed, is a ſpeculative advantage almoſt impoſſible to be attained; and a ſhorter duration of Parliament is not only undeſirable, but poſitively evil. Inſtead of attempting to correct the internal diſpoſition of Parliament to admit temptation, they would content themſelves with reducing that oſtenſible fund of corruption, which is externally applied with ſuch fatal ſucceſs. This, they contend, was the object of Reformation which lately formed the true centre of union of the Engliſh People; in purſuit of which exhortations to unanimity would have been altogether ſuperfluous and unneceſſary. And they obſerve, not without a mixture of ſeverity, that if the Nation had not been miſled by wild and viſionary ſchemes, their diſcontents would have been ſoon appeaſed by the ſatisfactory redreſs of thoſe grievances which had been the ſubject of their unanimous complaint.

It muſt be confeſſed, the ground on which the People *commenced* their oppoſition, was choſen with propriety. They felt the hardſhips of an expenſive war; they ſaw glaring abuſes in the management of the public purſe; and the requeſt for the correction of thoſe abuſes was founded on principles which the

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Friend to Liberty muſt approve, and which even the Advocate for War could not contradict. But if that patronage which forms the viſible influence of the Crown had been abridged in the moſt indefenſible inſtances, *without a radical Reformation of Parliament*, the practice of Corruption would ſtill have been carried on to as great an extent as ever, only perhaps in a more dangerous and degrading mode. The means of ſeduction are in the hands of Miniſters, to be applied at their diſcretion; and ſelf-preſervation would have taught them the proper application of thoſe means. Who can ſuppoſe, *loans of money* would not have been contracted on terms ſtill more groſsly diſadvantageous to the Nation; and the loſs of ſinecure places and unmerited penſions would not have been compenſated by ſhares of *beneficial ſubſcriptions*, in an adequate proportion? or, if the Miniſter had choſen to vary his mode of gratification, what could have hindered the immediate increaſe of the *Secret-Service-Money?* or the augmentation of the *Royal Debts*, incurred to any amount which might be neceſſary, and ſure to be diſcharged, without examination, by a grateful Parliament?

When a Senate, chiefly nominated by venal or dependent Electors, has received the taint of corruption, it wants that corrective principle which might throw off the infection, and reſtore its original purity—the controul of honeſt and uninfluenced Conſtituents. In ſuch an Aſſembly, acceptance frequently repeated wears off the ſenſations of ſhame and remorſe; the guilty habit of receiving gradually creates a demand that muſt be ſatisfied; and thus CORRUPTION becomes at laſt the avowed principle of Government. In this ſtage of political depravity, a Parliament accuſtomed to proſtitution may be induced to embrace the moſt pernicious meaſures of a

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bad but prodigal Adminiſtration, with as much warmth, as it would reject the beſt and wiſeſt plans of that honeſt Stateſman who ſhould ſcorn the ſupport of pecuniary influence. This is the conſummation of a corrupt ſyſtem of Government, which evidently contains the ſeeds of diſſolution. Ruin is its natural tendency, and muſt be its certain conſequence, unleſs by an amended repreſentation in Parliament, the due controul of the Conſtitution be reſtored to the Body of the People.

Events had almoſt verified the truth of this ſpeculation, when the increaſing influence of the Crown alarmed the fears and excited the oppoſition of the Country. At that moment, *without previous concert or communication*, a PLAN for the better Security of the Independence of Parliament, &c. was announced in the Houſe of Commons. The views of that Bill were nearly coincident with thoſe by which the People meant to regulate their propoſed Petition; and it is acknowledged with due reſpect to its celebrated Author, that it was happily calculated to facilitate the wiſhes *then* expreſſed by the Public. It hardly could be expected that a Senator yet uncertain of the popular ſupport, however diſtinguiſhed by zeal and abilities, ſhould offer a more extenſive plan of redreſs. But when the People, diſtruſting their Repreſentatives, ſought protection, againſt the over-bearing influence of the Crown, in legal Aſſociation and in the Reformation of Parliament, it was then as little to be expected that the popular Agents ſhould ſtop ſhort, and recommend, as the Object of Union, that Oeconomical Syſtem which is certainly inadequate to the efforts and expectations of the Collective Body. That conduct would have been a contradiction to the *firſt intimation* of their purpoſe, and to all their ſubſequent proceedings;

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it would have been treachery to themſelves, and to thoſe by whom they were appointed to act; and it would have forfeited their claim to any ſhare of the Public Confidence, as diſintereſted and independent men. Miſrepreſentation, in language alike injurious to the Leaders of Oppoſition, and to the popular Agents, would have irrecoverably blaſted the Public Cauſe, as a device cunningly contrived by diſappointed Stateſmen, and their factious Adherents. And thus, in purſuit of unanimity on *that ground*, diſtruſt and jealouſy would have been ſtill more widely ſpread, and the Aſſociations of the People, inſtead of being more cloſely cemented, would have been divided and broken up by an irreparable breach.

Men converſant in the buſineſs of Parliament may have regretted that a more cautious policy did not reſtrain the zeal of the Aſſociations to the correction of *official abuſes*; and the Aſſociations in their turn may have lamented that more vigorous counſels did not determine their Parliamentary friends to adopt thoſe *primary objects* of the popular plan, which alone can give efficacy or ſtability to the Oeconomical Reformation. Theſe are the unavoidable differences, not the faults, of Public Men, acting with integrity, but *without mutual intelligence* in circumſtances which are in a great meaſure new to the moſt extenſive obſervation. But ſince late experience has ſtill more clearly proved the utter degeneracy of Parliament, and conſequently the diſtruſt of the People has been increaſed and confirmed, a more effectual Reformation may now appear evidently neceſſary even to the former friends of palliative meaſures. And ſince a divided oppoſition to the Crown cannot accompliſh a due reduction of its alarming power; and no conſiderable Body of the People can ever be induced to unite in a ſteady defence of the common liberties,

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but on the ground of Parliamentary Reformation; it ſurely may be hoped from the virtue and public ſpirit of thoſe honoured perſons that their Coalition with the People *on that ground* is not a diſtant event.

It is not ſurprizing that even among the declared friends to a Reformation of Parliament, a conſiderable variation of ſentiment ſhould be found, and different ſyſtems of conſtitutional improvement ſhould appear to different minds to deſerve the preference; for on this, or on any ſubject, who can expect an exact coincidence of judgment in ſuch a multitude of Independent Men?

That the repreſentation of the People is extremely inadequate; that the ſeptennial duration of Parliament is a dangerous and unwarrantable Innovation; that Corruption cannot be reſtrained; that our Liberties cannot be ſecured but by the correction of thoſe groſs abuſes; theſe are propoſitions in which there is a moſt unanimous agreement. But whether the People ſhould attempt to reſtore annual Parliaments; to extend the right of ſuffrage univerſally; and to eſtabliſh a perfect equality of repreſentation; or, whether it does not behove them rather to confine their efforts to the accompliſhment of a more limited plan; to ſhorten the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years, and to reinforce the ſound part of our repreſentation by the addition of One Hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis: Theſe are queſtions which for ſome time were the ſubject of frequent diſcuſſion and much anxious deliberation; but not more than their importance to the Public well deſerved.

On behalf of the more extenſive plan, much was urged on the true principles of Government with indefa-

defatigable zeal; and the conſiderations which could be drawn from the natural rights of Men and the ancient privileges of Engliſhmen were preſented in every form of argument, with equal induſtry and ability. It is indiſputably true, that *annual elections* of Parliament were from the earlieſt times the practice of our forefathers: And frequency of election in a ſtate of repreſentation *not eſſentially defective*, would tend ſtrongly to maintain a due connection between the Conſtituent Body and their Truſtees; it would diffuſe a more general knowledge of the importance of that right; and the attachment to our happy Conſtitution would be more ſincere and general, as its privileges were more extended and better underſtood. That mankind are naturally equal, is alſo a propoſition which cannot be denied; and although wherever Society is eſtabliſhed, the introduction of inequality in ſome reſpects, is unavoidable, yet every humane and equitable mind muſt diſapprove invidious excluſions, by which that inequality is unneceſſarily increaſed. The right of ſuffrage, though not univerſally, was more extenſively enjoyed by our anceſtors before the Reign of Henry VI. than in the ſucceeding period: And if the manners and prejudices of the preſent age could admit *the reſtoration of that privilege* in its fulleſt extent, with an *annual choice of repreſentatives*, the Advocates for the more moderate plan would rejoice at the change.

The diverſity of ſentiment, therefore, which has in ſome meaſure retarded the union of the people, aroſe, not from a difference of political principles; for in them there is an entire agreement, but ſolely from conſiderations of a prudential nature. The queſtions in debate have been, not, whether thoſe doctrines be maintainable in argument, for it is admitted they are; but whether it be probable in the preſent

preſent ſtate of the nation, that thoſe doctrines in their full extent, are reducible to practice?——And if it be highly improbable, that a Reformation on that extenſive plan could be carried into execution, whether it be not expedient that the People wave ſomewhat of their juſtifiable claims, and content themſelves with that mode of Redreſs which is *leſs complete in theory*, but which appears *more eaſily attainable* by peaceful means, and when attained, *fully adequate* to the purpoſe of their oppoſition?

On the one hand it was obſerved, that an Army, as dangerous to the Conſtitution by the weight of influence as by its military proweſs, is now become an eſtabliſhed augmentation of the Royal Power; that an immenſe National Debt, with its concomitant train of taxes, contracts, ſubſcriptions, creates another abundant ſource of influence unknown to our anceſtors; that a large acceſſion of Patronage has accrued to the Crown from the Eaſt-Indian Territories, and the other numerous Settlements of the Britiſh Empire; that Parliament itſelf, ſeduced by thoſe multiplied attractions, has become but too viſibly dependent on the Crown; that if this great Aggregate of Power ſhould receive any material augmentation, it would be impoſſible by any union which could be formed, to recover the balance of the Conſtitution; and conſequently, although this ought not to intimidate but rather to excite the People inſtantly to concert the lawful means of that recovery, yet ſince the power to be oppoſed is truly formidable, and a defeat would be fatal to all ſucceeding generations, that it behoves them to proceed with caution equal to their fortitude. It was farther obſerved, that while the adherents of corruption would alike brand with the odious name of *innovations*, the improvements held out by each of the popular plans, however autho-

authoriſed they may be by former example, or juſtified by reaſon and the neceſſity of reformation, *the more extenſive ſyſtem* propoſing an abolition of all our preſent election-franchiſes, and a diſtribution of thoſe franchiſes anew in a different proportion, would probably appear injurious alſo to a multitude of Electors, who yet would zealouſly ſupport *the more moderate plan* for reſtoring the Conſtitution; that this total departure from the preſent eſtabliſhment of the Lower Houſe of Parliament, even where private intereſt was not materially affected, would alienate many by the magnitude of the operation, and more perhaps by its contrariety to the manners of the age; that it would offend the pride of the wealthy; excite the fears of the moderate; and ſhock the prejudices of men unaccuſtomed to political ſpeculation; and conſequently that to contend with the Crown on this diſadvantageous ground, would be to expoſe the Liberties of the Nation to almoſt certain ruin, by ſtruggling to communicate the election-franchiſe to perſons who too ſeldom know the value of it, or expreſs a wiſh to obtain it.

On the other hand, it was conſidered that although *the more moderate plan* would enlarge the Houſe of Commons, yet it would leave the preſent fabrick untouched; would preſerve the franchiſes of the whole maſs of Electors undiminiſhed; and in every reſpect would be leſs remote from the habits and practice of the age; that by the addition of at leaſt One Hundred Members to the repreſentation of the Counties and the Metropolis, their inferiority to the Boroughs would be in a great meaſure redreſſed, and the advantage of thoſe Electors who conſtitute the bulk of the Nation would be promoted without injury, and with little ſenſible inconvenience to any other claſs of Conſtituents; that although annual Parliaments certainly

tainly were not excluded by the more limited propoſal, yet in fact its immediate aim was the repeal of the Septennial Bill; which being confeſſedly a temporary expedient, utterly repugnant to the ſpirit of the Conſtitution, however excuſable from the neceſſity of thoſe times, would probably be now obtained with leſs difficulty than annual Parliaments; and might properly be conſidered as the beſt preparatory meaſure to their acquiſition; and conſequently that in all theſe reſpects the preference in the view of feaſibility was evidently due to the more limited plan.

In regard of efficacy *the more extenſive ſcheme* might indeed claim the priority of choice, if under the preſent circumſtances of the Nation the eſtabliſhment of it could be accompliſhed. But what is the ſuperior efficacy of an impracticable ſyſtem? The praiſe and perhaps the wiſh of the rational Patriot, but not the end of his political labours; for they will ever be directed to that beſt and moſt beneficial plan, which in given circumſtances can be attained. It is the juſt complaint of the Nation, that a corrupt majority of Burgeſſes may be gained to ſupport the moſt pernicious meaſures againſt the ſenſe of the incorrupt part of the Legiſlature, and the wiſhes of the Public; with this aggravation of the evil, that the poſſibility of relief by popular interference is protracted by a ſeptennial duration of Parliament. To *theſe fundamental abuſes* the repeal of the Septennial Bill, and the addition of One Hundred Members to the Counties, &c. as a balance to the Boroughs would be a *ſubſtantial correction*. Under this amended repreſentation, purged from every viſible taint of undue influence, and ſubject to the more frequent controul of the Nation by elections at an interval never exceeding three years, the whole Syſtem of Corruption would be overturned, and the Conſtitution would

acquire a degree of permanent ſecurity which it never attained in any preceding period.

By conſiderations like theſe, the People were induced to frame their Aſſociations on this more limited ground; and, as it then ſeemed reaſonable to conclude, ſo recent experience has now moſt manifeſtly proved that, their plan was not too narrow for the views and expectations of their Countrymen. With ſome exceptions of no great moment, theſe principles have been adopted or approved by every Aſſociated Body, and confirmed by a General Deputation from the reſpective Committees. Theſe principles have alſo received the declared approbation of Senators in each Houſe, whoſe Wiſdom, Integrity, and Public Spirit, are at once the honour and reproach of thoſe Aſſemblies.

A Bill on *the more enlarged plan* was indeed offered to the Lords by a Nobleman of the firſt rank and reputation *; and the motion was recorded on their journal as a ſolemn recognition of thoſe principles. But no Aſſociation has been formed on that ground, becauſe in the popular apprehenſion even that weighty recommendation could not compenſate the great and perhaps inſurmountable difficulties of the meaſure. But when the People had thus deciſively given their preference to *the more limited plan*, their Noble Advocate, far from preſſing them with the pertinacity of diſputation to reconſider and accept his favoured ſyſtem, generouſly laboured in concert with an Illuſtrious Friend † to accompliſh a general Coalition on the ground of their Aſſociation. This was the wiſdom of judicious Stateſmen—this was the

* His Grace the Duke of Richmond. † The Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne.

magna-

magnanimity of true Patriots. Their virtuous, though hitherto unavailing, efforts will be remembered with laſting gratitude and veneration; and in their zealous aſſiſtance on every future emergency, the truſt and confidence of the Nation will be repoſed.

The Committee of Aſſociation for the County of York have once more preſumed thus freely to communicate to their Fellow Electors their ſentiments on *the decline of the Conſtitution* and *the means of its Reſtoration.* From this ſurvey of the various plans of Reformation which have been offered to the People, their choice ſeems wiſely to have been fixed on that ſyſtem in which *efficacy* and *practicability* are moſt advantageouſly combined; and in the judgment of this Committee, if that SUBSTANTIAL REDRESS cannot be obtained, the formalities of an Upper and a Lower Aſſembly may ſtill be continued, but the Liberty of Britain muſt ſoon be no more. When the Nation has loſt the ordinary controul of the Conſtitution over the Repreſentative Body; when notwithſtanding their repeated complaints, alarming abuſes are protected and increaſed, and meaſures deſtructive to the common weal are ſupported and puſhed on by that Aſſembly, the neceſſity for *ſome popular interference* in a *leſs ordinary way*, becomes apparent and inconteſtible. To rectify a diſordered Legiſlature muſt indeed be a work of the greateſt toil and difficulty; but there is yet in the Independent Part of the Community a fund of vigour adequate to the taſk; and the ancient ſpirit of the Conſtitution ſtill affords unexhauſted reſources to the People, for a lawful, orderly and effectual interpoſition. Peaceful Aſſociation is the lawful mode adopted by this Committee, in concert with many of their countrymen; and by a ſteady proſecution of the *more moderate plan for the Reformation of Parliament in this mode*, they

they ſtill truſt the Conſtituent Body may regain its aſcendant over the Repreſentative Aſſembly. Far, therefore, from wiſhing to promote confuſion, or to prompt their fellow citizens to deeds of violence and deſperation; they exhort them with conſcientious ſincerity to confine their efforts within the bounds of legality. But within thoſe limits they exhort them with equal earneſtneſs, reſolutely to oppoſe that Syſtem of Corruption which is alike the bane of National Morality, and the ruin of Public Liberty.

With theſe views the Committee of Yorkſhire firſt embarked in this cauſe; in ſtrict conformity with them they have hitherto proceeded, and are determined to regulate their whole political deportment. *They have been menaced by High Authority; they have been defamed by Reverend Calumny*; but conſcious of the purity of their intentions, certain of the legality of their conduct, they chearfully commit their reputation to the juſtice of their countrymen, AND THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY TO THE PROTECTION OF THOSE LAWS WHICH CANNOT BE INFRINGED, WITHOUT A DIRECT ASSUMPTION OF DESPOTIC POWER.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE of *ASSOCIATION*

FOR THE

COUNTY OF YORK,

At their MEETING held on the 17th Day of OCTOBER, 1781.

YORK TAVERN, Oct. 17, 1781.

PRESENT,

At a *Meeting* of the *Committee* of *Aſſociation*.

Rev. Mr. Wyvill, Chairman
The Earl of Effingham
The Dean of York
Mr Chaloner
Rev. Mr. Maſon
Sir George Strickland
Mr. Morritt
Mr. H. Duncombe
General Hale
Sir R. D. Hildyard
Sir James Norcliffe
Mr. Strickland of Welburn
Mr. Strickland of Beverley
Mr. Tooker
Mr. Grimſton
Mr. Shore
Mr. Sykes
Mr. Withers
Mr. Cradock
Rev. Mr. Robinſon
Mr. Walker
Mr. Walker, jun.
Mr. Pool
Mr. Dring
Mr. Croft, jun.
Rev. Mr. Dade
Mr. Foljambe
Rev. Mr. Bourne
Mr. P. Milnes
Rev. Mr. Cayley
Mr. Yorke
Mr. Dixon
Mr. St. Quintin
Dr. Swainſton
Mr. F. Smyth
Mr. James Milnes, jun.
Mr. R. S. Milnes
Lieut. Col. Thornton
Rev. Mr. Dixon
Rev. Mr. Yarker
Mr. Baynes, jun.
Mr. Booth
Mr. Rawſon
Mr. Matthews
Mr. Athorpe
Rev. Mr. Wilkinſon
Mr. Turner
Rev. Mr. Comber
Mr. Stovin
Rev. Mr. Lawſon
Mr. Hill
Sir William Milner
Mr. Lloyd
Mr. Dawſon
Mr. Duncombe
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Courtney
Mr. Arthington
Mr. Maude
Mr. Dalton
Mr. Croft
Rev. Mr. Shuttleworth,
(elected this Day.)

RESOLVED, That the following Members be added to this Committee:

William Bagſhaw, Eſq; of Coates Hall
Rev. Richard Shuttleworth, of Kirkleatham
Jonathan Walker, Eſq; of Maſbrough
William Warner, Eſq; of Foſton
Henry Legard, Eſq; of Beverley.

Whereas it has been repreſented to this Committee, that the conduct of the Clergy who are Members of this Aſſociation, hath been cenſured from High Authority; and that they have been given to underſtand that their LATE EFFORTS in ſupport of the Liberty and Conſtitution of this country were *foreign to the function of a Clergyman, and not the road to preferment*,

RESOLVED, That a Proteſtant by entering into Holy Orders does not abandon his civil rights.

RESOLVED, That the Thanks of this Committee be given to thoſe Reverend Gentlemen who, thus preferring the public good to their own private emoluments, have ſtood forth the firm friends to the true intereſts of their country.

Read the paper intitled, "A Second Addreſs from the Committee of Aſſociation for the County of York, to the Electors of the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs, within the Kingdom of Great Britain."

‡§‡ *This Addreſs is contained in the foregoing pages.*

RESOLVED, That the Addreſs now read be adopted as the act of this aſſembly, and that the Chairman be requeſted to publiſh the ſame in the manner he ſhall judge moſt proper.

RESOLVED, That this Committee do adjourn to the Thurſday in Eaſter week next, ſubject to an earlier call by the Sub-Committee, or of the Chairman at the requeſt of any five members.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

FORM *of the* PETITION

AGREED TO AT THE

MEETING *of the* COUNTY *of* YORK,

Held the 30th of DECEMBER, 1779,

And ſhortly afterwards preſented to PARLIAMENT.

To the Honourable the COMMONS *of* GREAT BRITAIN, *in Parliament aſſembled:*

The PETITION *of the* GENTLEMEN, CLERGY, *and* FREEHOLDERS *of the* COUNTY *of* YORK.

Sheweth,

THAT this Nation hath been engaged for ſeveral years in a moſt expenſive and unfortunate war; that many of our valuable Colonies, having actually declared themſelves independent, have formed a ſtrict confederacy with *France* and *Spain*, the dangerous and inveterate enemies of *Great-Britain*; that the conſequence of theſe combined misfortunes hath been a large addition to the National Debt; a heavy accumulation of taxes; a rapid decline of the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of the Kingdom.

Alarmed at the diminiſhed reſources and growing burthens of this Country, and convinced that rigid frugality is now indiſpenſably neceſſary in every department of the State, your Petitioners obſerve with grief, that, notwithſtanding the calamitous and impoveriſhed condition of the Nation, much Public Money has been improvidently ſquandered, and that many Individuals enjoy ſinecure places, efficient places with exorbitant emoluments, and penſions unmerited by public ſervice, to a large and ſtill increaſing amount; whence the Crown has acquired a great and unconſtitutional Influence, which, if not check'd, may ſoon prove fatal to the Liberties of this Country.

Your

Your Petitioners conceiving that the true end of every legitimate Government is not the emolument of ANY INDIVIDUAL, but the welfare of the Community; and conſidering that, by the Conſtitution of this Realm, the National Purſe is intruſted in a peculiar manner to the cuſtody of this Honourable Houſe, beg leave farther to repreſent, that until effectual meaſures be taken to redreſs the oppreſſive grievances herein ſtated, the grant of any additional ſum of Public Money, beyond the produce of the preſent taxes, will be injurious to the Rights and Property of the People, and derogatory from the Honour and Dignity of Parliament.

Your Petitioners therefore appealing to the juſtice of this Honourable Houſe, do moſt earneſtly requeſt that, before any new burthens are laid upon this Country, effectual meaſures may be taken by this Houſe, to inquire into and correct the groſs abuſes in the expenditure of Public Money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to reſcind and aboliſh all ſinecure places and unmerited penſions; and to appropriate the produce to the neceſſities of the State, in ſuch manner as to the wiſdom of Parliament ſhall ſeem meet.

And your Petitioners ſhall ever pray, &c.

FORM

FORM *of* ASSOCIATION

AGREED TO AT

The GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

COUNTY of YORK,

Held the 28th of MARCH, 1780.

WHEREAS during the preſent expenſive and unfortunate war, the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of this Kingdom have been greatly diminiſhed; the Public Burdens grievouſly augmented by the annual impoſition of new and additional taxes; the National Debt enormouſly increaſed; and the undue influence of the Crown extended to an alarming degree by theſe very circumſtances which threaten the utter impoveriſhment of this Country: And whereas, in theſe times of National Difficulty and Diſtreſs, a juſt redreſs of grievances can only be expected from a free and uncorrupted Parliament; and meaſures tending, in a legal and peaceful way, to reſtore the Freedom of Parliament, cannot effectually be ſupported but by a general union of Independent Men throughout the Kingdom,

WE whoſe names are under-written, conſidering an Oeconomical Reformation in the expenditure of Public Money, to be a moſt eſſential and neceſſary meaſure for reſtoring the Freedom of Parliament;

And conſidering alſo, that the repreſentation of the People in Parliament is become extremely unequal, inſomuch that a great majority of Members is returned by decayed and indigent Boroughs, which are either at the command of the Crown, and a few great Families, or elſe open to general venality;

venality; whence ſupport in Parliament may be obtained for the meaſures of any Adminiſtration, however ruinous they may be to the great landed and commercial intereſts of this Kingdom, contrary to the true intent and uſe of the inſtitution of Parliaments; which unequitable diſtribution of the right to elect Repreſentatives in Parliament is now a principal cauſe of our numerous Public Evils, to which no radical cure is likely to be applied, till a more adequate Repreſentation of the People hath been eſtabliſhed by law.

And conſidering further, that when the fund of corruption hath been in ſome competent degree reduced, and a more equal repreſentation of the People obtained, more frequent elections might be reſtored, not only to the great content of the People, but with certain advantage to the Honour and Integrity of Parliament itſelf, without the miſchievous conſequence of expoſing Independent Gentlemen to vexatious conteſts with the Dependents of any Adminiſtration.

We do declare our Aſſent to

1. The Oeconomical Reform requeſted by the Petitions of the People; that plan of ſtrict and rigid frugality now indiſpenſably neceſſary in every department of the State; that moſt important regulation for reducing the unconſtitutional Influence of the Crown.

2. The propoſition for obtaining a more equal repreſentation in Parliament, by the addition of at leaſt One Hundred Knights, to be choſen in a due proportion by the ſeveral Counties of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

3. The propoſition for Members of the Houſe of Commons to be elected to ſerve in Parliament for a term not exceeding three years.

And in order more effectually to promote this laudable plan of public Reformation, by our joint aſſiſtance in a pacific way, we do aſſociate for that expreſs purpoſe, and we do teſtify the ſame by our ſignatures reſpectively. And we do reſolve, jointly and ſeparately, to ſupport theſe neceſſary regulations to the utmoſt of our power, by every meaſure that may be perfectly agreeable to Law and the Conſtitution.

More

More particularly we do reſolve, and do mutually and moſt ſolemnly engage, that until a reaſonable reform in the expenditure of Public Money hath been obtained, and until regulations for returning at leaſt One Hundred additional County Members to Parliament, and for ſhortening the duration of Parliament to a term not exceeding three years, have been eſtabliſhed by Law, we will ſupport, with our votes and intereſt, no Candidate whatſoever at the next General Election, or at any future Election, to repreſent this County, or any other County or Place in Parliament, from whoſe known integrity and attachment to our free Conſtitution, and his aſſent to theſe conſtitutional improvements, declared by ſigning this Aſſociation, or in ſuch other mode as to each Candidate may ſeem moſt eligible, we ſhall not be firſt fully ſatisfied that he will give his utmoſt ſupport in Parliament to the following propoſitions, or to ſuch part of the reform propoſed thereby as ſhall not then be accompliſhed, viz.

1. For one or more bills to correct profuſion in the expenditure of Public Money; to regulate the manner of making all Public Contracts, and the mode of keeping and paſſing Public Accounts; to reduce exorbitant emoluments of office, and to reform the abuſes of ſinecure places, and penſions unmerited by Public Service.

2. For a bill to eſtabliſh greater equality in the repreſentation of the People in Parliament, by allowing the ſeveral Counties of the Kingdom of Great-Britain to elect, in a due proportion, One Hundred Knights at leaſt in addition to the preſent number.

3. For a bill to ſhorten the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years.

A STATE

A STATE of the ASSOCIATED COUNTIES, &c.

And the *Objects* of their reſpective *Aſſociations*. *

Yorkſhire.	On the three propoſitions before-mentioned, viz. In Support of the Oeconomical Petition. 2. Of a Bill for the Addition of at leaſt One Hundred County Members. 3. Of a Bill for ſhortening the Duration of Parliament to a Term not exceeding Three Years.
Eſſex. - -	On the ſame Propoſitions.
Somerſetſhire -	Ditto.
Surrey. - - -	Ditto.
Buckinghamſhire.	Ditto.
Devonſhire. - -	Ditto.
Middleſex. - -	Ditto.
City of London. -	Ditto. (Committee now diſſolved.)
Hertfordſhire. -	On the *firſt* Propoſition.—*Reſolve* in Favour of the Second and Third.
Dorſetſhire. - -	On the *firſt* Propoſition.—*Inſtruct their Members* on the Second and Third.
Weſtminſter. - -	On the *firſt* and *Second* Propoſitions, and *generally* in Favour of ſhortening the Duration of Parliament.

☞ *The under-mentioned* COUNTIES, *although not actually aſſociated, have adopted the following meaſures in favour of the objects of the* YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION, *at their reſpective Public Meetings:*

Huntingdonſhire.	RESOLVE in favour of an equal repreſentation.
Glouceſterſhire.	RESOLVE in favour of ſhort Parliaments, and an equal repreſentation.
Suſſex. - - -	RESOLVE in favour of the œconomical reform, ſhort Parliaments, and an equal repreſentation. Committee authoriſed to draw up a Form of Aſſociation, if judged neceſſary.
	Kent.

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* This State is ſuppoſed to be exact; but it is poſſible that ſome Omiſſions or unintentional Miſtakes may have happened in it.

Kent. - - - RESOLVE in favour of the *three* propoſitions of the Yorkſhire Aſſociation.

Bedfordſhire. - - RESOLVE in favour of the *third* propoſition of the Yorkſhire Aſſociation.—Committee authoriſed to draw up a Form of Aſſociation, if judged neceſſary.

Berkſhire. - - RESOLVE in favour of the *firſt* and *third* propoſitions of Yorkſhire, and of an equal repreſentation.

PETITIONING BODIES

Who ſent DELEGATES to the General Deputation held in LONDON in 1780.

Counties of *York, Surry, Middleſex, Suſſex, Glouceſter, Hertford, Kent, Huntingdon, Dorſet, Bucks, Cheſter, Devon, Eſſex, Somerſet, Hants, Northampton,* Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*; and the Towns of *Newcaſtle, Nottingham,* and *Glouceſter.*

ASSOCIATED BODIES

Who ſent DELEGATES to the General Deputation held in LONDON in 1781.

Middleſex, Weſtminſter, Hertfordſhire, Devonſhire, Surry, Kent, Huntingdonſhire, Nottinghamſhire, Yorkſhire, Eſſex, and *London.*

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